

Message Text

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63-61

ACTION ARA-10

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P R 062110Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7529

SECDEF WASHDC

COMNAVBASE GTMO BAY CUBA

INFO CINCLANTFLT NORFOLK VA

CINCLANT NORFOLK VA

JCS WASHDC

CNO WASHDC

COMCARIBSEAFRON ROOSEVELT RDS PR

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT AU PRINCE 0240

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, HA

SUBJECT: HAITIAN "REFUGEES" AT GUANTANAMO

REF: COMNAVBASE GUANTANAMO P 041543Z FEB 74

SUMMARY: TWENTY-FIVE HAITIAN CITIZENS RESCUED AS DISTRESSED MARINERS BY USS NIPMUC ON FEB. 3 AND TRANSPORTED TO GUANTANAMO ON FEB. 4, WERE INTERVIEWED BY EMBASSY OFFICER ON FEB. 5 AS REQUESTED REFTEL. ALL APPEAR TO BE ECONOMIC REFUGEES ALTHOUGH SOME CLAIM THEY SERVED JAIL TERMS IN HAITI FOR PREVIOUS VIOLATIONS OF GOH TRAVEL CONTROL REGULATIONS AND ONE ADMITS HE STOLE THE BOAT USED FOR THE VOYAGE. END SUMMARY

1. TWENTY-FIVE HAITIAN NATIONALS PICKED UP AT SEA IN TWO SEPARATE BOATS BY THE USS NIPMUC ON FEB. 3 WERE BROUGHT TO GUANTANAMO NAVAL BASE ON FEB. 4. THE FIRST
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BOAT CARRIED 16 PASSENGERS AND THERE WERE NINE ON BOARD

THE SECOND VESSEL.

2. THE CAPTAIN OF THE NIPMUC REPORTS THAT, ON ENCOUNTERING THE FIRST BOAT, THE PASSENGERS ASKED HIM TO TAKE THEM TO MIAMI WHERE THEY INTENDED TO SEEK EMPLOYMENT. THE CAPTAIN EXPLAINED THAT HE WAS NOT BOUND FOR MIAMI BUT THAT HE COULD TAKE THE GROUP TO GUANTANAMO WHERE THEY WOULD BE TAKEN CARE OF. AT FIRST THE GROUP SEEMED RELUCTANT TO COME ABOARD BUT DECIDED TO ACCEPT THE CAPTAIN'S OFFER OF ASSISTANCE. SEVERAL HOURS LATER THE NIPMUC ENCOUNTERED THE SECOND BOAT IN OBVIOUS DISTRESS. THE PASSENGERS WERE EAGER TO COME ON BOARD BUT THE LEADER OF THIS GROUP SAID LATER THAT HE DID NOT WANT TO BE TAKEN TO GUANTANAMO BECAUSE HE KNEW THAT THE AUTHORITIES THERE WOULD RETURN HIM TO HAITI.

3. ON FEB. 5 AN EMBASSY OFFICER QUESTIONED ALL 25 IN SEPARATE INTERVIEWS. ALL 25 CLAIMED THAT THEY WERE HEADED FOR MIAMI TO SEEK EMPLOYMENT AND THAT THIS DECISION WAS PROMPTED BY THE HIGH COST OF LIVING IN HAITI AND THEIR INABILITY TO FIND JOBS THERE. TWO OF THE 25, FITO CAMAN AND STEPHAN GENTIL, AKA MERSON CAMAN, HAD BEEN PICKED UP AT SEA WITH TWO OTHER HAITIANS IN JUNE 1973 AND BROUGHT TO GUANTANAMO. AT THAT TIME THEY GAVE THE SAME STORY.

4. WHEN QUESTIONED ABOUT ANY PREVIOUS PROBLEMS WITH THE HAITIAN AUTHORITIES, ALMOST ALL OF THE 25 GAVE THE SAME VERBATIM ACCOUNT OF HAVING BEEN RECENTLY THREATENED BY A "TON-TON MACOUTE" FOR HAVING COMPLAINED ABOUT THE HIGH COST OF LIVING IN HAITI. ALL OF THEM DENIED HAVING ANY FRIENDS OR RELATIVES IN JAIL. THEY WERE UNABLE TO IDENTIFY THE MAN WHO THREATENED THEM. THE STORY DOES NOT SEEM AT ALL PLAUSIBLE SINCE ALL OF THESE INDIVIDUALS WERE IN DIFFERENT PLACES AT THE TIME OF THE ALLEGED ENCOUNTER. ONE OF THE LAST MEN TO BE INTERVIEWED, HOWEVER, VOLUNTEERED THE INFORMATION THAT THE LEADER OF THE GROUP HAD INSTRUCTED THE PASSENGERS TO GIVE THIS STORY IF QUESTIONED ABOUT ANY HISTORY OF ARREST.

5. THREE OF THE PASSENGERS CLAIMED IN ADDITION THAT THEY HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN ARRESTED AND HELD FOR ABOUT TWO TO SIX

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MONTHS FOR HAVING BEEN DEPORTED FROM NASSAU. ALL FOUR HAD LEFT ILLEGALLY WITHOUT OBTAINING HAITIAN PASSPORTS AND CLAIMED THAT THEY HAD GONE TO THE BAHAMAS IN SEARCH OF JOBS. ONE OTHER CLAIMED TO HAVE BEEN HELD IN JAIL FOR THREE DAYS FOR RUNNING A BORLETTE WITHOUT A LICENSE. QUITE OBVIOUSLY, THESE ARE NOT POLITICAL OFFENSES.

6. CAMAN AND GENTIL WERE RETURNED TO HAITI IN JUNE 1973.

THEY WERE HELD IN PRISON FOR ABOUT SIX WEEKS ON THE GROUNDS THAT THEY HAD EXITED HAITI ILLEGALLY, THAT IS WITHOUT PASSPORTS AND EXIT VISAS. GENTIL ALSO ADMITTED TO THE AUTHORITIES AT GUANTANAMO THAT HE HAD STOLEN THE BOAT IN WHICH HE AND HIS EIGHT COMPANIONS LEFT HAITI ON JAN. 20, 1974. IN LIGHT OF THESE FACTS, IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE HAITIAN AUTHORITIES MIGHT NOT BE AS LENIENT WITH THESE TWO MEN AS THEY WERE IN JUNE OF LAST YEAR. HOWEVER, THE MATTER IS AN ENFORCEMENT PROBLEM RATHER THAN A POLITICAL OFFENSE.

7. THE NAMES AND DATES OF BIRTH OF THE HAITIANS INVOLVED ARE:

FREDA BOULIN	8 MAY 1954
FRITZ SAINTIL	25 MAY 1956
WILNER BELFONT	2 DEC 1957
MICHEL SAINTUS	18 SEPT 1947 - CAPTAIN OF THE FIRST BOAT

SILIEN DERADEL	11 SEPT 1930
EMANES ZIDOR	19 DEC 1953
LUCETO BELLEFLEUR	19 NOV 1953
LHERRISON PIERRE	16 JULY 1941
MAX PIERRE	7 JULY 1954
YOLANDE DANGER	19 JULY 1954
JACQUELINE PIERRE-LOUIS	8 JUNE 1954
MILO PIERRE	25 SEPT 1949
LUDOVIC PIERRE	22 MARCH 1936
ANOL JOSEPH	9 FEB 1947
JEAN DELANSE	8 FEB 1948
ADAM PIERRE	16 JUNE 1941
LUCIEN TOUSSAINT	2 MAY 1954
DALES BIENAIME	30 MAY 1944
YVES BELLEVUE	8 NOV 1948

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THESE NINETEEN INDIVIDUALS CLAIM NO RECORD OF ARREST IN HAITI.

THE OTHER SIX, WHOSE NAMES FOLLOW, CLAIM PREVIOUS ARREST RECORDS:

STEPHAN GENTIL, AKA MERSON CAMAN, 15 FEB 1953, WAS RETURNED TO HAITI FROM GUANTANAMO IN JUNE 1973 AND SUBSEQUENTLY IMPRISONED FOR VIOLATION OF HAITIAN IMMIGRATION LAWS. HE ALSO CLAIMS THAT HE STOLE THE BOAT IN WHICH HE LEFT HAITI ON JAN. 20, 1974.

FITO CAMAN - 5 APRIL 1955, WAS RETURNED TO HAITI FROM GUANTANAMO IN JUNE 1973 AND SUBSEQUENTLY IMPRISONED FOR VIOLATION OF HAITIAN IMMIGRATION

LAWS.

ROLAND BOULIN - 2 AUG 1947 - CLAIMS THREE DAYS
IMPRISONMENT FOR OPERATING A BORLETTE WITHOUT
A LICENSE (BORLETTE IS A NUMBERS GAME).

VICTOR MILOT - 24 DEC 1946 - CLAIMS TWO MONTHS IN
JAIL FOR TRAVELING TO NASSAU IN VIOLATION OF
HAITIAN IMMIGRATION LAWS.

RENE CHARLOTIN - 30 MARCH 1950 - CLAIMS FIVE MONTHS
IN JAIL FOR TRAVELING TO NASSAU IN VIOLATION OF
HAITIAN IMMIGRATION LAWS.

MEDES PIERRE - 15 NOV 1957 - CLAIMS SIX MONTHS IN
JAIL FOR TRAVELING TO NASSAU IN VIOLATION OF
HAITIAN IMMIGRATION LAWS.

8. LOCAL NAME CHECKS BY THE POLITICAL AND CONSULAR
SECTIONS ARE NEGATIVE.

9. THE EMBASSY RECOMMENDS THAT IT BE AUTHORIZED TO
APPROACH THE GOH FORMALLY TO ARRANGE RETURN OF THESE
HAITIANS. WOULD REQUEST ASSURANCES OF RETURN WITHOUT
INCURRING ANY PENALTY FOR MOST OF THE HAITIANS BUT
WOULD HAVE TO QUALIFY OUR REQUEST TO PERMIT APPROPRIATE
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LEGAL ACTION BY THE HAITIAN COURTS WITH RESPECT TO THOSE
WHO HAD VIOLATED GOH TRAVEL CONTROL REGULATIONS PREVIOUSLY
AND IN THE CASE OF GENTIL WHO STATES HE STOLE THE BOAT.

10. ACTION: REQUEST INSTRUCTIONS.
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